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**TESTIMONY BY JUSTIN DART, JR BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT MARCH 6, 1997. RAYBURN HOUSE  
OFFICE BUILDING.**

**MR. CHAIRMAN. IT IS AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO APPEAR BEFORE  
YOUR DISTINGUISHED SUBCOMMITTEE.**

**I AM HERE TODAY IN SUPPORT OF THE ASSISTED SUICIDE FUNDING  
RESTRICTION ACT. IT'S NOT A PERFECT BILL, BUT IT'S A GOOD  
START.**

**IN 1948, WHEN I WAS 18 YEARS OLD, I WAS PARALYZED BY POLIO.  
THE DOCTORS TOLD MY FATHER THAT I WOULD PROBABLY DIE IN A  
FEW DAYS. THEY SAID THEY WERE NOT GOING TO MAKE A GREAT  
EFFORT TO SAVE ME, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR EVERYONE  
IF I DIED. MY FATHER FOUND NEW DOCTORS. SINCE THEN I HAVE  
LIVED 49 YEARS OF BEAUTIFUL LIFE, FOUNDER OF THREE  
BUSINESSES, FIVE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS. I HAVE BEEN  
BLESSED WITH A MAGNIFICENT FAMILY.**

**MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM A LIFE MEMBER OF ACLU, AN ADAMANT  
ADVOCATE FOR THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF AMERICANS WITH  
DISABILITIES, BLACK AMERICANS, HISPANIC AMERICANS, ASIAN  
AMERICANS, NATIVE AMERICANS, GAY AND LESBIAN AMERICANS,  
OLDER AMERICANS, WOMEN AND ADHERENTS OF EVERY RELIGION  
AND IDEOLOGY.**

**I FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE TO  
GOVERN THEIR OWN LIVES AND THEIR OWN DEATHS. I HAVE THE  
GREATEST RESPECT FOR MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES HERE  
TODAY WHO WOULD LIKE TO REINFORCE THAT RIGHT.**

**MY LIFE BELONGS TO ME AND TO THE GOD OF MY CONSCIENCE.**

**EQUAL ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN DREAM**

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**BUT MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM TERRIFIED BY THE ASSERTION THAT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH CERTAIN DISABILITIES AND ILLNESSES ARE NOT WORTH LIVING, AND THAT SOCIETY IS DOING US A FAVOR BY KILLING US. THIS WAS THE RATIONALE FOR THE MURDER OF THOUSANDS IN 1930S GERMANY.**

**THIS ASSERTION IS PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS IN THE CONTEXT OF PROPOSALS TO RATION HEALTH CARE.**

**THIS ASSERTION, IN COMBINATION WITH ANCIENT PREJUDICE, DIGNIFIED BY RESPECTABLE PUBLIC MEDIA AND ORGANIZATIONS HAS A DEVASTATING IMPACT ON VULNERABLE FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS.**

**MY BELOVED YOUNGER BROTHER PETER, WAS AN AIR FORCE JET PILOT WHEN HE GOT POLIO IN THE FIFTIES. AFTER A NOBLE STRUGGLE TO OVERCOME HIS DISABILITY, TOOK HIS OWN LIFE BECAUSE SOCIETY CONVINCED HIM IT WASN'T WORTH LIVING.**

**MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM PROFOUNDLY APPALLED BY THE SUGGESTION THAT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA MIGHT LEND ITS CREDIBILITY AND ITS RESOURCES TO THIS MURDEROUS FALSEHOOD BY PAYING DOCTORS TO KILL PEOPLE.**

**I AM APPALLED BY THE PROSPECT OF THE RICHEST NATION IN HISTORY DECIDING THAT IT COULD AFFORD TO PAY DOCTORS TO KILL PEOPLE, BUT COULD NOT AFFORD HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES THAT WOULD FREE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF THEM FROM IMPRISONMENT IN NURSING HOMES, AND ENABLE THEM TO LIVE AND TO WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. WITH SERVICES THAT EMPOWERED PEOPLE TO LIVE AS FIRST CLASS CITIZENS, SUICIDE WOULD NOT BE A MAJOR ISSUE.**

**SELF-DETERMINATION ABSOLUTELY. SUBSIDIZED DEATH, NEVER!**

**MR. CHAIRMAN, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, COLLEAGUE AMERICANS, LET US REJECT THE POLITICS OF DEATH. LET US JOIN TOGETHER IN THE POLITICS OF LIFE. LET US GO FORWARD TOGETHER IN THE GREAT TRADITION OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, MARTIN LUTHER KING, ED ROBERTS AND ELIZABETH BOGGS.**

**.LET US UNITE TO CREATE A SOCIETY THAT USES ALL ITS RESOURCES 'TO EMPOWER EVERY PERSON TO LIVE HIS OR HER GOD GIVEN POTENTIAL.**

**LET US JOIN TOGETHER IN KEEPING THE SACRED PLEDGE: ONE NATION, UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. LIFE FOR ALL. AMERICA FOR ALL!**